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Five anti-war California Democrats vote against troop resolution

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(03-21) 12:30 PST WASHINGTON (AP) --

Five anti-war California Democrats were among 11 lawmakers who voted Friday against a congressional resolution to show support for U.S. troops because they said the measure also endorsed President Bush's decision to go to war.

Rep. Mike Honda, D-San Jose, said he "wholeheartedly" backed American forces but opposed the resolution because the House Republican majority "decided to politicize the issue by drafting a resolution that included language in support of President Bush's misguided Iraq policy."

The other Californians joining Honda were Barbara Lee of Oakland, Fortney "Pete" Stark of Fremont, Maxine Waters of Los Angeles and Diane Watson of Los Angeles.

The 392-11 House vote, with 22 members voting present, came early Friday morning after a sometimes angry and emotional debate. It contrasted with the few reservations expressed in a 99-0 Senate vote Thursday for a similar resolution with less effusive praise for the president.

The House members who opposed the resolution said they objected in particular to language in the resolution expressing "unequivocal support ... to the President as Commander-in-Chief for his firm leadership and decisive action in the conduct of military operations in Iraq as part of the on-going Global War on Terrorism."

Lee said her thoughts and prayers are with U.S. forces.

"What I cannot support, though, is this resolution that endorses the war against Iraq that is now under way," she said. "I believed and still believe diplomatic alternatives existed. The inspections process was working. Keeping our troops out of harms way has been and remains first and foremost on my mind and in my heart."

Still, most Democrats who opposed the Iraq resolution in October that gave Bush the authority to use force in Iraq either voted for the new resolution or expressed their displeasure by voting present.

"In all good conscience, I cannot and will not vote for a resolution that supports and endorses a failed policy that led us to war," said Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., who voted present.

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, another opponent of the war resolution, said the only issue at the moment is rallying behind U.S. forces and the president.

"When we go into battle, despite our differences on policy, when we go into battle, it will be one team, one fight," said Pelosi, who supported Friday's resolution.

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